

Comments Concerning the DEP's Draft Diesel Clean Up Plan

On behalf of the Milford Environmental Concerns Coalition (ECC) and as chair, I would like to comment on the DEP's Draft Diesel Clean up Plan. The ECC is in the process of forming a coalition of interested parties in our city to support a Diesel Bill that will meet the pollution reduction goals of the SA 05-07. We are particularly interested from the health standpoint, as we are located in New Haven County one of the areas "designated as being a non-attainment with the federal ambient air quality standard for PM 2.5."

Health being our real concern, means we can only support a Diesel Bill that presents options that provides for retrofitting school buses in particular, for public transportation buses, and that the options meet and honor the goals of SA 05-07. As of now, after reading the DEP's Draft and Roger Smith's comments on the website, we do not feel that the DEP's options meet these goals, that there is too much leeway to do nothing. We would like to say that we are in agreement with CWA's positions as outlined in their testimony posted on the DEP website.

To create a successful Diesel Bill, we **must not** look or think in terms of impossibilities because of the economics or be persuaded that the economics take prime place in the equation of economics versus health. It must be that health takes prime place. We need to address this debate in terms that we have no choice, that this is literally a life and death issue. And let the facts and data show that the money spent for retrofitting these buses is a bargain when compared to lost attendance, health care, medications, hospital admissions and quality of life for asthmatic children.

A few years ago, in a letter to the Editor's column of the New Haven Register, a man said he had noticed that from the time diesel buses were introduced to the school systems, there was a definite rise in the incidents of asthma that soon began to skyrocket. He worked with diesel engines and has spent a greater part of his life fixing and upgrading them to be less polluting and more efficient. I see this as empirical evidence that we cannot ignore.

I would like to see the DEP's draft reflect more information on cost savings on the ledger side of health and to present options that actually meet the pollution reduction goals of SA 5-07. And in addition, some streamlining of the information to make it more friendly and readable for the legislator, who by legislative time, will have less and less time to read all the required documents.

Thank you for your time and attention and for all the time and effort that was spent on this draft plan to clean up diesel.

Sincerely,

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